

Message Text

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42/41

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SCS-03 SCA-01 DRC-01 /095 W

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P R 261105Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9650

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

DEPCHJUSMAG UDORN THAILAND

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 5018

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, LA

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF AMERICAN CITIZEN BY PATHET LAO
IN SHOOTING INCIDENT

REF: VIENTIANE 4991

1. SOTH PHETRASY, SENIOR PATHET LAO REPRESENTATIVE ON JCCIA, WAS NOT A RECEPTION LAST NIGHT AND I SOUGHT MEETING WITH HIM ON URGENT BASIS THIS MORNING. EMBASSY LAO POLITICAL ADVISER-INTERPRETER GOT THROUGH TO HIM PERSONALLY. SOTH SAID HE VERY BUSY TODAY (WEDNESDAYS ARE CABINET MEETING DAYS) AND TOMORROW AND THEN THERE IS WEEKEND. PERHAPS WE COULD MEET NEXT WEEK; IF MATTER URGENT, I COULD WRITE TO HIM.

2. I THEN CALLED ON NEW MINFONAFF CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, NAKKHALA SOUVANNAVONG, WHO IS OLD FRIEND. I TOLD HIM I WANTED HIS ADVICE. I REVIEWED INCIDENT, MADE CLEAR THAT WHILE GIBSON WAS NOT MAKING FUSS, EMBASSY COULD NOT SIT STILL AND HAVE AMERICAN CITIZEN HELD CONTRARY
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TO LAO LAW. FURTHERMORE, PATHET LAO WERE CLEARLY

USING CASE FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. THIS WAS NOT CON-
DUCIVE TO CLIMATE OF RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUC-
TION. I WAS PREPARED TO HAVE MATTER RESOLVED QUIETLY
BUT I WAS NOT PREPARED TO IGNORE IT. I HAD SEEN THE
VIENTIANE SIDE REPRESENTATIVE ON JCCIA; I HAD BEEN
TURNED DOWN BY THE PATHET LAO REPRESENTATIVE ON THE
JCCIA; I NOW WANTED TO SEE THE SENIOR PATHET LAO REPRE-
SENTATIVE IN VIENTIANE. I VERY MUCH HOPED I WOULD NOT
HAVE TO GO TO PRIME MINISTER BUT THAT WAS MY NEXT STEP.
HE FULLY CONCURRED, ENCOURAGED ME TO SEE PHOUMI AND
SAID HE WOULD TRY GET APPOINTMENT. AS OF THIS EVENING,
I HAVE HAD NO WORD.

3. CONSUL MURPHY AGAIN WENT TO SEE GIBSON WHO REMAINS
IN GOOD SPIRITS. EVIDENTLY HE WANTS TO AVOID HEATING
UP THE SITUATION WHICH MIGHT MAKE HIS STAYING ON IN
LAOS IMPOSSIBLE. HE IS IN BUSINESS AND HAS CAPITAL
INVESTED HERE. HE ASKED COUNSUL TO GET PAPERS FROM HIS
HOME WHICH WOULD PROVE HE WAS RETIRED FROM MILITARY
BECAUSE PATHET LAO POLICE HAD BEEN ASKING FOR SUCH PROOF.
MURPHY AND SECURITY OFFICER LEVIS DID GO, BUT FOUND
NO USEFUL PAPER. I THEREFORE PROVIDED GENERAL CERTI-
FICATE TO EFFECT GIBSON WAS U.S. CITIZEN, RETIRED FROM
MILITARY IN 1964 AND NOW PRIVATE BUSINESSMAN IN LAOS.
I AM NOT SANGUINE THAT THIS WILL HELP.

4. RADIO PATHET LAO DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE PURSUED
ITS ATTACKS BASED ON THIS CASE, BUT PRESS HAS PICKED
IT UP. LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF CBS, UPI AND WASHING-
TON STAR NEWS HAVE ALL EXPRESSED INTEREST, BUT AS FAR
AS WE KNOW HAVE YET TO PRINT ANYTHING ON IT. WE ARE
PLAYING IT STRAIGHT, ANSWERING QUESTIONS FACTUALLY AND
TRYING TO AVOID BLOWING UP MATTER WHICH MIGHT MAKE IT
MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE.

5. IF I CANNOT OBTAIN EARLY APPOINTMENT WITH PHOUMI,
I SHALL ASK TO CALL ON SOUVANNA, UNLESS DEPARTMENT
INSTRUCTS ME OTHERWISE.
CHAPMAN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
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Disposition Reason:
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30 JUN 2005

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To: STATE
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